

Dear Friend,

I'm writing to you, because I know that you are feeling very low. Please read this letter. It maybe hard to believe, but I am some-one who cares about what happens in your life. There have been times when I have lost all hope and been desolate and alone. If you are in such a place today, please let me try to help you overcome this bleak darkness. Please know that you are not alone in feeling this way. I too, have been lost and in anguish, in fog, in a pit, with no apparent way out, and no desire to go on.

I know how hard it is to think clearly, because distress can be so confusing. It is terribly painful to be where you are art the moment but most importantly, things can get better.

When you are so tired, it is hard to hold hope that things can change. Take time to think things over. At times when everything seems to have gone wrong, and life stresses seem overwhelming, emptiness and anguish can seem permanent. But, please hear these words. There is huge power in hope. The time ahead can be different. I can say this because I know from experience. My own life has changed for the better. My understanding of myself and what keeps me well, has improved. I have gained strength to choose and to make changes which over time have worked out for me.

Please give yourself time and space. Find someone who will listen to you and support you to find the help you need. Everything can and will change with time.

There can be a time in the future when something makes you smile, a child, a pet, a film, a book, a joke. There can be a time when you see the sunshine and it brings you comfort. There can be a time when you share a confidence, walk with a friend and know that the new day ahead is so much better than today.

In writing this I want you to know that, I too, have felt helpless and hopeless. That I have either given up caring or I have cared too much. I have been lucky, I have spoken up to get help and I have been heard. I have been supported at different times by some-one or something, to find the inner resolve to keep going. I have become determined in my pursuit of a happier life.

*" At times, our own light goes out and is rekindled by a spark from another person. Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those who have lighted the flame within us." -Albert Schweitzer.* I love this quote because it reminds me that there are people who carry hope and can change lives. The right people who value us make a difference.

However hard it is to believe, right now I want to share this hope with you. I care that you too, can find an inner flame of hope, to keep you going. No-one, claims that recovery is easy. It is a challenging journey to take on. But however hard, it offers opportunities and possibilities that you may have forgotten exist.

Please know that doing little things can make a big difference to you life. Sometimes it takes doing one small thing differently, to change our direction of travel.

Remember how unique and special you are. Please, place value on yourself. Do one small thing, just for You, because you are special and you matter. Look up to the sky. Know that we all see the same sun and the same stars and that we breathe the same air. We are all more the same than different. Do something simple for yourself, make and drink a cup of tea or eat an orange. Breathe peacefully as you do it. Just for this moment, notice your breathing, Let worries be and trust that feeling of acceptance that touches you as you breath deeply. You can build on this. It is part of self belief. Like you, I have had to learn to trust this feeling.

I want to share something else. It is another quotation. It became very important to me. It looks at the pain that premature death by our own hand causes. I found it on the internet. It was the shred of light in the darkest tunnel that made a connection for me. I held on to this through the toughest times, and now I am able to share it with you today.

*"I had a friend that died by suicide. For years, when I'd think of him, I'd cry. I cried because he was such a bright light, a sensitive and loving soul and he couldn't see it. I cried because he hid his pain too well. I cried that hard deep cry as I went through it all again and again in my mind replaying each word I'd said to him, each word I hadn't ... He came to me in a dream years later ... said that he was sorry, that had he known how many hours and how many days we that loved him would spend crying in the torment of his choice and his absence, had he known that we would become the carriers of his pain, he would have chosen differently."* Please Stay by Jeweliet,

Like Jeweliet in her quote, I ask, Please stay. Please choose differently. There is hope. Please be patient. This too shall pass.

There are many places to find hope, when you are able to look.

Please look at the Recovery Devon website ([www.recoverydevon.co.uk](http://www.recoverydevon.co.uk)) There is a page dedicated to finding hope. It has a brilliant resource library. There are stories of personal recovery in the Creative Café and a section on looking after yourself, which can give you practical ideas to make life easier.

Please seek the help that you need and deserve. Please, ask a friend, make a phone call. speak to your GP, knock on a door, seek help. Please, please don't give up. It will take time but you can feel better soon.

Know that I am thinking of you and that I wish you well.

Please, take care of You

With love, hope and with kindest regards

Linden